

JOURNEYS AND LANDSCAPES IN THE DATÇA PENINSULA: ALİ AGAKİ OF CRETE AND THE TUHFEZADE DYNASTY*

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OUT OF THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF ASIA MINOR, just below Bodrum (Halicarnassus) but above Marmaris (Phycus), a long and narrow tongue of a peninsula stretches into the Aegean between Kos and Rhodes, appearing to catch the island of Symi in its pincers. Today this is known as the Datça peninsula, which requires some explanation. Ancient Cnidus, located originally halfway along the isthmus, was once called Stadia (Stadea, Statea, Statia).¹ This was eventually corrupted into (s)Tad[i]ya, Dad[i]ya, Dadya, then Dadça and finally Datça.

The Enigma of Menteşe

According to ethno-archaeological findings, the present people of Datça stand at the tail end of an enormous process of mixing and mingling which has drawn into its vortex Dardians, Rhodians, Cretans and other Aegean islanders, as well as Crimeans, Rumelians, Arabs, Berbers, Egyptians, Sudanese, Ethiopians, Circassians, Jews, Kurds, Armenians, Tahtacı Alevis, Spanish Gypsies, and even Indians.² Many among them have their special histories, inevitably merging fact and fiction, though only some are of an obviously

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1 The well-known site at the western tip of the peninsula was not the original location of the city; see G. Bean, *Turkey Beyond the Meander* (London 1971), 135.

2 B. Ergenekon, 'Dorian Archaeology, History and Local Folklore in Datça', in D. Shankland (ed.), *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: The Life and Times of F. W. Hasluck, 1878-1920*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 2004), 453-464.

post hoc, ideological construction. For example, Berbers from the Maghreb claim to be descended from those taken there by the eminent Grand Admirals of the sixteenth century, Barbaros(sa) Hayreddin Reis/Paşa and Turgut/Dragut. They married local women in North Africa (they say), but forgot neither their homeland nor their Turkishness, and eventually re-migrated to the peninsula. By way of contrast, the dwellers of Emecik (as well as Yakaköy) may tell you that they are descended from Spanish outcasts, from gypsies, or even from lepers who were cast ashore at Sarı Liman, down the road from the Temple of Emecik, who somehow cured themselves with the abundant herbs of the peninsula.

Today Datça is the name of the entire neck of land as well as of a small coastal town on its southern coast (Fig. 1a-b). In the nineteenth century, this Dadya/Datça was one of a dozen or so settlements of comparable size and importance. More specifically, it was one of four villages that for centuries had been bunched close together halfway on the promontory, on the slopes overlooking the Gulf of Symi (Hisarönü). Separated by a couple of kilometres at most, they were called Dadya, Elaki, İlya and Aleksî, and a generically named landing-place, İskele (Skala), served all four.³ In time, it was the last which grew into the modern resort town of Datça, while Dadya became Eski Datça.⁴ A little anchorage turned tourist port,⁵ new Datça at the former İskele is now beyond recognition even for those, like myself, who were there in the late 1970s.

In contrast, in the two older settlements which have survived, that is to say, Dadya (which has become Eski Datça) and Elaki (which has become Reşadiye), the traditional fabric, surrounded by large belts of cultivation, is miraculously well preserved. The rest of the peninsula, too, still retains its connections to the Ottoman past. It offers a challenge to the historian who would stop and wonder about the adventures of its wrinkled, pinkish *Osmanlı* tomatoes, so-called, the terracotta tiles to be found here and there which bear the stamp of a certain *Şirket-i Cezire-i Rodos* (in both Greek and Ottoman), or Giridli Ali Agaki, a local notable who once founded the Tuhfezade dynasty.

3 The administrative centre of the district kept shifting between these three villages (the orthography of which also kept changing). According to Muğla court registers as quoted by M. Çanlı, from 1894 to 1898 the administrative centre was Aleksî; see M. Çanlı, *Eski Hukuki Kaynaklarda Datça. Muğla Şer'îye Sicillerine Göre (1885-1911)* (Muğla 2003): "Dadya nahiyesinin merkez-i hükümeti olan Aleksî karyesi" (Defter 152 [dated 1894-1898], 84/41-211). In 1904, the population of the sub-district (*nahiye*) of Datça had exceeded the population of Marmaris (*kaza*). At that time Dad[ı]ya was the administrative centre of the *nahiye*. Then the seat of government was moved yet again, this time to Elaki. In the context of a policy of the re-organisation and renaming of the villages following the 1909 enthronement of Mehmed [Reşad] V, both the whole peninsula and its administrative centre were renamed Reşadiye. The first municipality in the peninsula was established in 1915. Datça/Datya survived in administrative documents, and in 1934 the Reşadiye peninsula was renamed Datça.

4 In the 1890s, a couple of Greek-owned coffee-houses were located at the landing place: see "Dadya İskelesi" in Çanlı, *Eski Hukuki Kaynaklarda Datça*, Defter 154 (dated 1900-1906), 192/67-444. It was in 1947 that the administrative centre of the town was moved from Reşadiye to the landing-place, which was initially called Yeni (New) Datça.

5 F. Stark, *The Lycian Shore* (London 1956), 78.



Fig. 1a: Sketch map of Dadya/Datça and its wider geographical framework.

A More Layered View of the Gentry and Notables

Not all studies on the Ottoman provinces distinguish between (at least) two levels of the gentry and notables: (a) those urban-based dynasties who were closely integrated into the state elites, and (b) a lesser group of rural families whose power and prominence was also sanctioned by the state – but only in a way which was mediated through the patronage of the former.⁶

Of course, the second (rural) group, too, had their clients. These last were even further removed from the centres of power (both geographically and socially). Thus, they were also not in front-line competition for the posts or fortunes coveted by the urban or the first-rank rural notables. Instead, their horizons seem to have been limited to ensuring a prolonged and comfortable existence for their line, perhaps founded in the past by a relatively illustrious ancestor. It is easy to understand why they have been neglected by historians: rarely do they show up in archival sources. The first two groups had a stake in central authority (and vice versa). But the relative remoteness of the third group or tier of families appears to have led to a virtually zero level of visibility for them in the state documents on which Ottoman history has been largely built since the mid-twentieth century.

Occasionally, however, a special case turns up. So it is with a certain family in Dadya, rustic but self-possessed, on which there is a wealth of primary sources, ranging from architecture to court registers, also including oral accounts, mural paintings, wedding

6 For a thought-provoking discussion about the term 'provincial elite' in the Ottoman context, see A. Anastasopoulos, 'Introduction', in Idem (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V. A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), xi-xxviii.

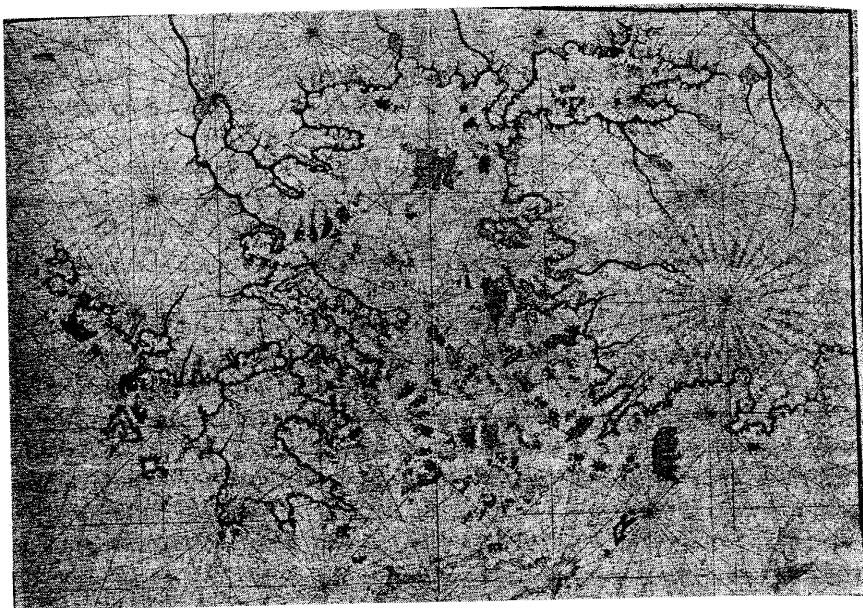


Fig. 1b: Location of Dadya in the eastern Mediterranean perspective. From: İ. Bostan and A. Kurumahmut (eds), *Haritalar ve Coğrafya Eserlerine Göre Ege Denizi ve Ege Adaları* (Ankara 2003), Plate II.

rings, kitchenware, or gravestones. There is a possibility for ethno-archaeological remains, and the streams, rocks, hills, trees and orchards on their estates, to be also taken into account.⁷

An Abundance of Sources, and Scope for Methodological Innovation

All this is so varied and unusual that it virtually calls for a 'total history' approach. By itself, this is an invigorating prospect for Ottoman history. At the same time, in this microclimate, this small world to which the Tuhfezades always stood as outsiders, the nature of the primary sources available is also promising for other avenues and approaches. Since the realities of this quasi-autonomous dynasty were not dictated purely by the centre-periphery relationship (in both its political and financial dimensions), they can and should be told from within. Otherwise put, the material holdings of the family can truly reflect on the secret, unofficial history of another way of life in the Ottoman provinces. Because of a general scarcity of private documentation, this is a rare opportunity in Ottoman history.

⁷ Noteworthy in this regard are U. Baram and L. Carrol (eds), *A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire: Breaking New Ground* (New York 2000); T. Takaoğlu (ed.), *Ethnoarchaeological Investigations in Rural Anatolia* (Istanbul 2004).

What we have here, moreover, is not a story of fringe elements or transient carpetbaggers. On the contrary, the Tuhfezades – possibly like many other rural families of wealth and power, whom Ottomanists have not studied enough, either as individual cases or an entire social group – appear to have enjoyed a relatively safe, long, and affluent life in their inaccessible native recess. They were confident, outward-looking, and capable of enjoying the benefits of self-governance in an otherwise incommensurable geography. Distant as they were, they seem to have acquired a distinct identity involving a variety of border-crossings. Since such hybridities undermine the very concept of monolithic cultures or nations (even in the case of an Early Modern empire), the case at hand provides a favourable terrain for transnational history, for the study of permeable and fluid borderlands, diasporas, encounters and travels across all kinds of boundaries – in short, for explorations of processes and relationships which connect separate worlds.⁸ In an area which has seen the intermingling, conquering, reconquering and separation of peoples, distinct yet overlapping and co-existing with each other, nineteenth-century nations are even more emphatically imagined communities rather than entities rooted from time immemorial. On the south-west coast of Asia Minor, there were no natural or permanent lines of demarcation. In contrast with official government business (both central and local) which has provided the standard framework for the post-seventeenth-century centre-periphery paradigm, it is the un-bounded diffusion of people, ideas, practices, and goods that looms large in this corner of the Aegean.

The Early Ottoman Presence in the Region

The promontory's morphology is characterised by igneous mountain ranges stretching east-west, and by plains huddling in their bends. It was this rough and rocky topography that determined the scattered pattern of historical settlement, with most villages along the

⁸ I originally argued for this dimension in an earlier (and much shorter) version of this paper; see T. Artan, 'Cretans Turned Turks, Venetians, Englishmen: Encounters in Ottoman Space in the 19th Century', paper presented at the Sixth European Social Science History Conference (Section on International Families VI: Cultures of Diaspora), Amsterdam, 22-25 March 2006. Compared and contrasted with other kinds of history (world, regional, comparative and post-colonial) which also aim to transcend national boundaries, transnational history has become an identifiable genre over the last decade: A. Curthoys and M. Lake, 'Introduction', in Eadem (eds), *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective* (Canberra 2005), 5-20. See also L. N. Bacsh, G. Schiller and C. Z. Blanc (eds), *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation States* (London 1994); G. Therborn, *Between Sex and Power: Family in the World, 1900-2000* (London 1994). However, some historians who argue that history has always paid considerable attention to the travels of people, ideas, practices or commodities across geographical, political or cultural borders, question this difference. Some others have pointed to the 'dangers' of transnational history, arguing that, in its sterile international context (of specialised scholarship) it is disconnected from the audience whose history is being written. Some have also claimed, dismissively, that transnational history is in vogue because of globalisation.

southern coast and overlooking the Gulf of Symi (Hisarönü). The northern shore, looking out over the Gulf of Kos (Gökova) is more hostile. Hills are covered by macchia, and valleys with groves of almond and olive trees, both of which probably grew wild in the past. Over a hundred small bays, recurrently called *bük* (Turkish for a thicket or a jungle) in reference to the rich vegetation around them, ring the peninsula from north and south. Over many centuries, they used to shelter, at the confluence of the Aegean and the Mediterranean, both officially licensed corsairs and much feared pirates.⁹

Indeed, it is because of the terribly unsafe waters of the Aegean that so little is known about peninsular settlement in medieval times. Even the history of the larger region of south-western Asia Minor under Ottoman rule is mostly clouded. The House of Menteşe had established itself in Caria in the thirteenth century, only to be nearly overthrown by the conquests of Bayezid I in 1389-1391. Eventually, it was only after the final defeat of the Menteşoğulları by Murad II in 1424 that the region came firmly under Ottoman control.¹⁰ Paul Wittek's study was the first to introduce a variety of sources, though limited in quantity, for the study of this early Ottoman phase. His eminent student Elizabeth Zachariadou then explored the relations of "trade and crusade" between Venetian Crete and the emirates of Menteşe and Aydın in the same period.¹¹ Hans Theunissen has further contributed to our understanding of commerce and politics in the region with an annotated edition of a corpus of documents pertaining to Ottoman-Venetian diplomacies from the late fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century.¹² Two dissertations thirty years apart, by Ekrem Uykucu and Zekâi Mete,¹³ have surveyed several tax registers (*tahrir*) recording

- 9 "The difference between corsairs and pirates is not always immediately clear to all: pirates fought against everybody while corsairs had their sovereign's permission to fight against its enemies" (M. P. Pedani, 'The Ottoman Empire and the Gulf of Venice (15th-16th C.)', in T. Baykara (ed.), *CIÉPO Osmanlı Öncesi ve Osmanlı Araştırmaları Uluslararası Komitesi XIV. Sempozyumu Bildirileri. 18-22 Eylül 2000, Çeşme* [Ankara 2004], 585-600). For the Atlantic and the Caribbean, the corresponding Anglo-American term is privateer(ing) rather than corsair(ing). For matters involving pirates and corsairs, also see S. Faroqhi, 'The Venetian Presence in the Ottoman Empire (1600-1630)', *The Journal of European Economic History*, 15/2 (1986), 345-384; İ. Bostan, 'Adriyatik'te Ticari Limanların Gelişimine Korsanlığın Etkisi', *Bilim ve Ütopya*, 12/147 (September 2006), 23-29.
- 10 P. Wittek, *Das Fürstentum Mentesche. Studie zur Geschichte westkleinasiens im 13.-15. Jahrhundert* (Istanbul 1934); reprinted in translation: *Menteşe Beyliği. 13-15'inci Asırda Garbi Küçük Asya Tarihine Ait Tetkik*, trans. O. Ş. Gökyay (Ankara 1944; repr. 1986), 29-30.
- 11 E. A. Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydın (1300-1415)* (Venice 1983).
- 12 H. P. A. Theunissen, 'Ottoman-Venetian Diplomacy: The 'Ahd'-names. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments, together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents', *EJOS – Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies*, 1/2 (1998), 1-698.
- 13 E. Uykucu, 'XVI. Yüzyılda Menteşe Sancağı (Tapu Tahrir Defterlerine Göre)', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1974; Idem, *İççeleriyle Birlikte Muğla Tarihi (Coğrafya ve Sosyal Yapı)* (Istanbul 1983 [1967]); Z. Mete, 'XV. ve XVI. Yüzyıllarda Muğla', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2004; *TDVİA*, s.v. 'Menteşe' (Idem). For some elaborations on the sources uncovered by Uykucu, see S. Faroqhi, 'Sixteenth Centu-

kazas, karyes, mahalles, hanes, hass, zeamet and *timar* recipients and their revenues, as well as the pious foundations of the *sancak* of Menteşe in the sixteenth century.¹⁴ Both, however, have the common flaw of entirely ignoring the non-Muslim populations, causing many questions to be left unexplored. Further on, the post-seventeenth-century history of Menteşe remains uncharted.

Centres, Districts, Land Tenure

The administrative centre seems to have shifted frequently under Ottoman rule. In other words, a multi-centred *sancak* with an itinerant Pasha appears to be the case for the sixteenth century. Although Muğla then seems to have moved ahead as an urban centre, even in Evliya Çelebi's time Ottoman potentates (*ümera*) and militia of the Menteşe district were being settled at Peçin. Nearby Milas (so close that the former was referred to as *Peçin nam-ı diğer Milas*¹⁵) and Balat also stand out as sizeable settlements, home to a variety of political, cultural or commercial activities. Uykucu identifies some of the governors (*sancakbeyi*) for 1480-1560, as well as the *hass* (crown) lands of the Sultans and princes, and the large prebends of viziers and governors, as recorded in the 1517 and 1530 *tahrirs*.¹⁶ Unfortunately, one archival series that one might immediately think of turning to, i.e., the *Mühimme Defterleri* (Registers of Important Affairs), proves to be of little help. As these were mainly written in response to accusations levelled at local administrators, the implication is that not many complaints from the region (other than those concerning the unruly behaviour of pirates and bandits) reached Istanbul.¹⁷

One of the earliest Ottoman records on the Menteşe district, a tax register dated to the reign of Bayezid II (1481-1512), enumerates eight *nahiyes* (Pınaz, Çine, Milas, Peçin,

ry Periodic Markets in Various Anatolian *Sancaks*: İçel, Hamid, Karahisar-ı Sahib, Kütahya, Aydın, and Menteşe', *JESHO*, 22/1 (1979), 32-80; Eadem, 'Menteşoğullarından Osmanlılara Muğla', in İ. Tekeli (ed.), *Tarih İçinde Muğla* (Ankara 1993).

- 14 The tax registers in question are BOA, Tapu Tahrir (TD) 39 (n.d., r. Bayezid II [1481-1512], possibly 1483), incomplete, includes only Pınaz and Meğri; BOA, Tapu Tahrir (TD) 47 (n.d., r. Bayezid II), *mufassal*, incomplete; BOA, Tapu Tahrir (TD) 61 (H. 923/1517), *mufassal*, complete; BOA, Tapu Tahrir (TD) 337 (1562/1563), *mufassal*, incomplete; Tapu Kadastro GM Kuyud-u Kadime Arşivi (TK KKA TD) 110 (1583), *mufassal*, complete. There are also registers of important affairs: BOA, Mühimme Defterleri I-IV (1520-1560); BOA, Tapu Tahrir (TD) 176 (1532/1533) recording *cemaats* (= oymak) and *tırs* (= oba) settled in Menteşe together with a short *kanunname*; and two waqf registers: BOA, TD 338 (1562/1563) and Tapu Kadastro GM Kuyud-u Kadime TK KKA TD 569.
- 15 C.BLD 31 (21 Cemaziyelâhir 1275). Peçin was abandoned by the mid-twentieth century.
- 16 Uykucu, *Muğla Tarihi*, 70-71 and 105-106.
- 17 For such bandits, brigands or other outlaws, see *Mühimme Defteri 90* (Istanbul 1993). In the Registers of Important Affairs, what are mostly recorded are the routine communications between the centre and this remote province; see Faroqhi, 'Menteşoğullarından Osmanlılara Muğla'.

